

ALASKA TRAUMA REGISTRY NEWSLETTER

State of Alaska
Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Public Health
Community Health and Emergency Medical Services

JANUARY 2002 - Happy New Year!



Alyeska Ski Patrol in the new helmets, 2000-2001 ski season.

"I was wearing one of the helmets that Ron bought for us when I had a rather spectacular fall last spring – it saved my life."

Michael Callahan
Alyeska Ski Patrol

In five years of trauma registry data, (1995-1999), 132 skiers were hospitalized due to skiing injuries. Most of these injuries involved fractured legs, pelvis and hips (64%), followed by injuries to the arms, shoulders and collarbones (17%). Eight percent injured their head, neck and face, 7% their spinal column, and 5% internal organs.

Although the extremities were the most commonly injured body part in skiing, brain injuries were the most serious. Over 50% of the brain injuries were scored serious, severe or critical on the Abbreviated Injury Scale, which ranges from minor to fatal. Only one-quarter of the non-brain injuries were classified as serious or worse.

The Alaska Injury Prevention Center purchased 13 ski helmets for the Alyeska Ski Patrol last year. "We wanted to change the way skiers and snowboarders think about wearing helmets," said Ron Perkins, Executive Director of the Center. "By having some of the best skiers on the slopes wearing helmets, we thought we could encourage the amateur enthusiasts to wear them too."

Recently Karen Lawfer, Coordinator for Juneau Safe Kids, "sold" the Eaglecrest ski patrol on the idea of helmets. Twenty helmets will be provided with grant money through the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Injury Prevention Program.